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SPEECH DELIVERED BY SENATOR JAMES R.
DOOLITTLE, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS,
OCTOBER 4, 1864.

The following is a typewritten speech found among the private papers and correspondence of the late ex-Senator James Rood Doolittle, of Wisconsin. Whether the original speech was, or was not, delivered *ex tempore*, the undersigned has no means of knowing. It is certain that Judge Doolittle was easily capable of doing such things, particularly, when he was deeply interested, as it is known that he was in President Lincoln's re-election. And, if the original speech was delivered *ex tempore*, or from brief notes, this reproduction can be considered as authoritative, for it was no doubt prepared under Judge Doolittle's immediate supervision and dictation. The document is worthy of preservation in spite of its brevity; and students of the political history of Illinois will, I feel certain, welcome its appearance on the pages of the Quarterly. It has never been published.

DUANE MOWRY.

Milwaukee, Wis., October 18, 1909.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE UNION WIGWAM
IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, TUESDAY
EVENING, OCTOBER 4, 1864.

FELLOW CITIZENS.—On the 11th of February, 1861, Abraham Lincoln, President-elect, left his home, at this place, to go to Washington, to become, on the 4th of March ensuing, President of a great country and a great people.

In the whole history of the world there is nothing more simple, more touching, or more sublime than the scene at his departure.

Bear in mind the situation of affairs then existing. That conspiracy which had been plotting disunion for more than a quarter of a century; which had been secretly arming, organizing and drilling its forces; which had filled the cabinet of Buchanan with treason, had at this time already made open war against the government of the United States. I know the full force of what I say, and I repeat, open and uncompromising war had been levied and actually waged against the United States, before Mr. Lincoln left his home for Washington. I say nothing now of ordinances of secession, I speak only of acts of flagrant war.

On the twenty-seventh of December, 1860, the rebel forces seized Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney, and a United States revenue cutter at Charleston.

On the third of January, 1861, they captured Fort Pulaski, in Georgia, and the arsenal at Mt. Vernon, Alabama, with 20,000 stands of arms.

On the fourth of January, they seized Fort Morgan, in Mobile Bay—the same fort which Admiral Farragut and General Smith have lately recaptured, adding glory to our arms on sea and on land.

On the ninth of January, they fired into the steamship *Star of the West*, bearing the flag of our country, loaded with provisions for our forces in Fort Sumpter, and drove her from the harbor of Charleston.

On the tenth of January the rebel forces seized Forts Jackson, St. Philip and Pike, near New Orleans, closing against us the mouth of the Mississippi, as they had already, by a battery erected upon that river in the state of Mississippi, closed its navigation for hundreds of miles above.

On the fourteenth of January they seized the Pensacola navy yard, and Forts Barancas and McRae, and laid siege to Fort Pickens.

On the eighteenth they seized Baton Rouge arsenal; on the thirty-first the New Orleans mint and custom house; on the second of February, the arsenal at Little Rock, in Arkansas; on the eighth, the rebel provisional constitution was adopted, and on the ninth of February, Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens were chosen President and Vice President of a pretended rebel Confederacy, claiming, and by force of arms, asserting jurisdiction over nearly one-third of the states and territories of the United States.

While all this was transpiring, James Buchanan, then President, refused to raise a hand in defense of the Constitution he had sworn to "preserve, protect and defend."

It was under circumstances like these, in the midst of a civil war already begun, which, by bold and rapid movements of the rebels, and by the surrender of Buchanan's administration, had already given possession of nearly 2,000 miles of our sea coast, and one-third of our states to the rebellion, that Mr. Lincoln, the citizen President-elect, unarmed and with a few friends, left his home here for Washington. Citizens of Springfield, what a scene was here presented on that memorable eleventh of February! It still lives in your memories. The words he uttered at parting with you, as you stood around him uncovered and in tears, are known the world over; they are classic alike in their simplicity, touching pathos, and depth of meaning. "No one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To this people I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century; here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. *A duty devolves upon me which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington.* I feel that I can not succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him. On that same Almighty Being I place my re-

liance for support, and *I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I can not succeed, but with which success is certain.*"

How clearly he saw, how deeply he felt the great duty, devolved upon him; the work to which he was called, viz: to maintain the Union, some of whose pillars had long been undermined, and were then crumbling round him; to defend the Constitution, whose authority the party then in power, and which is seeking it again, would not enforce; and declared it had no right to enforce by arms; to execute the laws in every state; and to hold, occupy and possess the forts, property, and places belonging to the government, one-third of which had already been seized by armed traitors, or surrendered by the administration of Buchanan; in one word, to take from the hands of a weak President, the flag of the Union thus insulted, outraged and trampled upon, and raise it aloft, as the glorious standard of a common country—with not one stripe erased, nor one star obscured—and to bear it full high advanced, right onward, until, in spite of rebellion at home and threatened intervention from abroad, it should float again, honored, respected over every foot of the soil of every state and territory of the United States.

How true, almost prophetic were those parting words! O, what a duty; what a gigantic work, what a heavy responsibility was indeed devolved upon that heart and brain! When would man more need Divine assistance to sustain and strengthen him? And shall we not give him our sympathy and support?

Never, in my opinion, since the world began has a higher duty, a greater work, or a weightier responsibility rested upon any human being than upon him. (Cheers.)

For almost four years he has been engaged in discharging that duty, in performing that great work—in bearing that responsibility. The amount of his mental and physical labor is almost incredible—more than that of ten Presidents in ordinary times. In the mere matter

of appointments to office he has been called upon to make more and to sign more commissions than all the other Presidents put together. That he may have made mistakes is true; but the marvel is, that he has not made many more, and can only be accounted for in the fact that he is endowed by nature with a vigor, activity and clearness of intellect unsurpassed in any man of our time (cheers); by a patriotic, unselfish singleness of purpose in disposing of every question as it arises. (Cheers.) The wielding of great patronage is the severest test of executive ability. That in addition to all his other duties he has done so so long and upon so vast a scale, and still retained unbounded popularity among the masses of the people, is the highest evidence of capacity, and will place his name in history among the great ones of the earth, as one of the immortal few, that were not born to die. (Great and prolonged cheering.)

Could those who denounce Mr. Lincoln as a tyrant and usurper know him as you have known him for a quarter of a century, or as I have seen him and come to know him at Washington, during these last four years of trial, their tongues would cleave to the roof of their mouths. I have seen him under various circumstances; in the joy of success—in the anguish of defeat. It has been my good fortune to share, in some measure, his friendship and confidence, as it has been my highest duty at all times, to give him words of encouragement and support.

I have seen him by day and by night; in time of victory, when his soul was lighted up and his face beamed with a halo of joy. I have seen him in the hour of defeat, when his soul ready to sink, his head bowed like a bulrush, in agony and tears; and I know, from personal knowledge, that the sense of that great duty which he felt and expressed at his departure from this place in February, 1861, has been ever present with him—has never forsaken him. It has become, and is, the absorbing idea of his soul. To restore peace to a bleeding

country; to save the Union, and with it our national life; to preserve constitutional, republican liberty to ourselves and to our posterity forever; and to bring our beloved country safely through this terrible baptism of blood and fire redeemed and regenerated, to take its true place in the vanguard of civilization, leading, by the light of its great example, all nations and peoples under the whole heavens to the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and, through them, to a higher, better and more divine life; these are the ideas which fill his soul to overflowing.

There are times, it is true, when, weary and overburdened, his soul finds temporary rest and refreshment in sparkling humor or playful anecdote. While to the captious, hypercritical or casual observer this might seem to be light, trifling and undignified, how much better thus than to seek refreshment in the wine cup and strong drink—a thing in which he never indulged. But how little do they know of the deep undertones of the silver chords of his interior life, when touched by the ever present and ever pressing thought of that great duty. That supreme thought is with him by day and by night—morning, noon and night—the last ere he sleeps—the first when he awakes; and, if it be not sacrilege, draw aside the veil of his most private hours, when sleep refuses to descend upon that aching head and almost fainting heart; go, in the still watches of the night to the executive chamber, when that soul, bending alone in the presence of the Almighty, implores that Divine assistance, without which he can not succeed, but with which success is certain. In that hour when he sweats, as it were, great drops of agony, what is the burden of his prayer? O, God, when will this duty be discharged? When will that great work be finished? O, Thou, without whose notice not a sparrow falls, save this nation and spare this people; preserve the Union of these states and the liberties of all men; grant, O, grant us that decisive victory which shall put an end to this unholy rebellion and restore peace—a peace based upon Thine

eternal justice; a peace consistent with national authority and national life; and, a peace which shall forever secure constitutional and republican liberty, and the equal rights of all men. God, the Almighty, grant such a peace; that it may come soon, and come to stay.

Fellow citizens, such a peace is coming. It is not distant, if we are only true to ourselves. The final, crushing victory over the rebellion draws nigh. Its hope of a defeat of the Union armies in the field, and its still greater hope of dividing the North, and overthrowing the administration at the polls in November are vanishing together. (Great cheering.) Smith and Farragut at Mobile, Sherman at Atlanta, Sheridan in the valley of the Shenandoah, and Grant before Richmond, are fast crushing out its military power; while the loyal masses of the people of the Union are gathering hand in hand around the political standard of the Union, and preparing to demonstrate, by tremendous majorities that, in spite of the Chicago convention, its platform and candidates, that there is no divided North. (Here Mr. D. was interrupted by great cheers.)

I repeat, the people are substantially one, of one mind, and of one heart. They now stand around the President, shoulder to shoulder in political action, as well as in arms; and, with one voice bid him to lean on them, next to the Almighty, for support, until his great duty is accomplished, his work finished.

Much has been done already. Among other things, we have recaptured Beaufort and Morris Island, giving us command of the harbors of South Carolina, including Charleston. We have recaptured also Norfolk and Portsmouth and all the coast and rivers of Virginia; we have also recaptured Newbern and all the harbors of North Carolina except Wilmington, and, it is said, Farragut, the old Neptune of the seas, is about to look after that place; we have recaptured Fort Pulaski, commanding the harbor of Savannah, in Georgia; also Forts Barancas, McRae, and the Pensacola navy yard, in Florida, the best harbor of the Gulf; we have recaptured Forts

Jackson, St. Philip and Pike, and with them the city of New Orleans, the great metropolis of the rebellion.

By a crowning victory in the recapture of Vicksburg by General Grant, followed by that of Port Hudson, we restored to the loyal people of the Union, and to all the world, the navigation of the great river Mississippi—the vital artery—the great *aorta* of national Union and bond of enduring peace.

By the operations of the victorious army of the Cumberland we have recaptured from the rebellion Kentucky, Tennessee, much of Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, and, we trust in God, we verily believe the time so impatiently waited for, but hitherto so long delayed, will soon come, when the head and front and power of the rebellion will be crushed by the victorious armies of Grant and Sheridan around Richmond (great and tremendous cheering)—or compelled to retreat into South Carolina, there to be pursued and trampled to pieces upon the soil of that state where treason was first hatched; (great applause) where treason with wicked hand first pulled down the holy stars and stripes of liberty and union, and raised in its stead the rattlesnake—fit emblem of disunion and slavery, rebellion and civil war.

Our flag now waves and our national authority is re-established over two-thirds of the jurisdiction seized by the rebellion. When such is our situation; when so much has been done; when the finishing stroke is just about to be given, lo! what do we hear? The Chicago convention cries aloud to the President, to the armies and to the people, Hold! stop! cease hostilities! The war is a failure!

Gentlemen of the Chicago convention, I tell you no. The people by majorities of hundreds of thousands will say no. Our soldiers and sailors, victorious on sea and land, almost unanimously say no. All the considerations which make this government, under the constitution, worth living for or dying for, all the memories of the

past, the interests of the present, and the hopes of the future, say no. And were it possible for us to draw aside the veil which hangs between the living and the dead and hold communion with the spirits of that mighty host—our sons and brothers and fathers who have laid down their lives on a hundred battlefields a sacrifice to save this Union and defend the Constitution—one question by them, ought to overwhelm the Chicago convention with shame unutterable. Have we then died in vain? Will you now abandon the flag for which we gave up our lives?

The people of Illinois in vast multitudes are now gathering at Springfield—the home of Abraham Lincoln. And for what? To send him words of encouragement and good cheer; to declare that he must and shall be re-elected President of the United States, in order that he may finish the great work assigned him; to ask God's blessing to sustain and strengthen him; and to pledge themselves to stand by him in this great struggle to the end, and until Abraham Lincoln is not only President-elect of the United States, but acknowledged and respected as the President of all the states, united and free. (Great and prolonged cheering.)